

News Release



Controller of the State of California - Kathleen Connell

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE CONTROLLER KATHLEEN CONNELL SPONSORS BILL TO HELP PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS BUY HOMES IN THE CITIES WHERE THEY WORK

ASSEMBLYWOMAN REBECCA COHN INTRODUCES BILL AIMED AT EASING THE HOUSING CRISIS FOR PEACE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTERS

Sacramento, February 14, 2001 – State Controller Kathleen Connell announced proposed legislation that would help public safety officers make down payments on homes in some of the state's most expensive cities. The bill was introduced today and will be carried by Assemblywoman Rebecca Cohn, (D) Saratoga.

The Down Payment Assistance Pilot Program would offer up to \$7500 for a down payment to qualified officers who intend to buy homes in the city where they work. The cities covered by this pilot program are Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, San Jose and Long Beach.

"When police and firefighters who risk their lives every day to protect our communities can't afford to buy a home in those communities, something needs to be done," said State Controller Kathleen Connell. She noted that more than 42% of the police and firefighters who work within the City of Los Angeles live outside the city limits.

Assemblywoman Rebecca Cohn, author of the bill, also explained why this bill is necessary. "I think we all know instinctively that public safety employees who live in the communities they protect are a good thing," said Cohn. "However, they often can't afford to do so."

The proposal would allow 2,000 loans using money from the general fund.

The down payment loans would be interest deferred and payment deferred for the first five years, and if the public safety officer remains in the city and employed at the agency full time for five years, the loan will be forgiven altogether.

Under the proposal officers would have to meet the following criteria to be eligible for the loans:

- Must live and work in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, San Jose or Long Beach.
- Must be a full-time law enforcement officer employed by a municipal government, and sworn to uphold and make arrests for violations of federal, state county, or municipal law, OR, be employed full time by a municipal government emergency services department (fire or medical) as a sworn officer.
- Must be a first-time home buyer or be buying for the first time in that city.
- Annual Income must be no more than 150% of the county or statewide median income for families of three or more, or no more than 130% for families of one or two persons. The higher median income, either county or state, will apply.

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